

Editorial

THE GOLDEN TOMB.

Jackson, California, a mining town in the Mother Lode country, has paid the toll demanded of those who delve in the earth for gold, and today stands calm but dry-eyed in her bewilderment at the cost. Forty-seven of her men died in the Argonaut mine early on the morning of August 28, it was learned Tuesday, September 19, when their bodies were brought up from the rock tunnel, walled in with filmy bulkheads of their own building, that had been their tomb for three weeks.

It was California's worst mine disaster, in one of California's greatest gold producers, and it was the hardest blow in mining the Golden State has ever had to suffer.

Three weeks ago last Sunday night men deep in the Argonaut believed they smelled smoke. A shift boss took two men and went to investigate. They found the shaft afire at the 3600-foot level, chanced death from gas, and were carried through fire in a mining car called the "dip," and reached safety at the top of the mine.

Then began the work against the fire, which presently merged into one of rescue of the 47 men left below, for the fire had now blockaded the shaft completely and prevented their escape.

Men came from all over the west to offer their services in the work of rescue. Mining companies in distant States, even from far-off Old Mexico, telegraphed proffered assistance.

For many weary days and nights, disappointed sometimes at unexpected difficulties, and heartened sometimes by

equally unexpected bits of good luck, rescue crews drove ceaselessly through the choked tunnel that had once connected the two mines, or battered at the separating walls of rock.

At last a drill was driven through the last barrier of rock into the Argonaut.

Sweating shoulders drove steel picks at the rock until this hole had been enlarged enough to permit a man to pass. Hope rose and fell as the first and second bulkhead the men had built in their attempt to stay the poison gases were found. But, alas—the third! It was a pitiful structure, gaping in places so that the rescuers could see through it, but it checked the air current somewhat and the men in the oxygen helmets halted before it, afraid to tear it down while the air before it was poisonous, lest they thereby cause sudden death to any who might be alive beyond it. Hope stood at its highest when this last bulkhead was found, and from that height it made its greatest plunge. Before those who waited above for news of their loved ones knew even that the rescuers had broken through the bulkhead, word had already come in some way to them that the bodies of the 47 men had been found and counted.

Jackson took the blow calmly and presently found comfort in the knowledge gained from notes left by two of the men, and from the reports of the rescuers regarding the men's work before they died, that a quick, merciful death had come to them, instead of the agonies of starvation. There was no lingering in the inky darkness 3000 feet below sea level. The gas came, then lethargy, then oblivion.

Jackson, in Amador county, lies about 40 miles southeast of Sacramento, the State capital of California. It is a small, mining town of perhaps 2500. The Argonaut and Kennedy mines are located there, which are among the deepest in the world, each possessing shafts nearly a mile downward. These mines are located in the heart of the Mother Lode country, and for more than sixty years have poured forth a golden treasure. Gold was first discovered there in California in 1848, and since then it is said the Argonaut has yielded more than \$20,000,000.

The tragedy of the Argonaut mine will hardly be immortalized in the legends or song of this nation, but its is a recital that grips the heart none the less. The men who go down into the depths of the earth to discover its hidden treasures, just as the men who go out to sea in ships, daily offer their lives and all, and but little accounting is made of it. Only when attention is riveted to their hazards by some catastrophe like that in California does the world come to understand the ordeals and hardships of so many of its children. What terrors and what suffering, both of body and of mind, these 47 men endured in their vain fight for life can be imagined but not fully realized, because the secret is locked up in their chilled and motionless hearts.

Every person in this country who read the daily record of the gallant fight made by the party of rescuers was grimly fascinated by its possibilities. There was hope, faint as it was, that the entombed men would be reached at least before all of them had paid to the fullest with their lives. And, as much as it was felt to be certain, the discovery of the dead bodies came as a dispiriting shock to all who scanned the papers from day to day for some news of the rescue. It was with a sense of profound regret that the nation read the disappointing news when the final barrier was broken down and the sad secret of the golden tomb revealed.

Heracles and Jason and Orpheus and all the crew that brought back the golden treasures from Colchis are honored as great heroes, but they were no more heroic than the men who worked for three weeks a mile below the base of a California mountain, in the muck and grime of a poisoned atmosphere to save their entombed fellows. The efforts of these latter also deserve an epic, but in this day and time something new will happen to divert the attention of the nation and those heroes will be forgotten. Already, calm and silent as the grave save for the winds that moan through its cavernous depth, the deserted Argonaut lies idle and resting beneath the wan, ghostly stars, a gloomy scene that fills the soul with awe. Even the birds of the mountain nights shun its barren and lonely presence; while it may be that less fastidious bats have taken up their abode in its rented and charred heart, with spiders great and small weaving in the moonbeams a sickly shroud. It is the way of a world where there is so much of change and divided interests. The moan of the winds through the mountain cedars will be forgotten, and men will continue to follow the lure of gold, and millions will be lost of body and soul in the quest.

An automobile drove up and stopped in front of the post-office in Hayti the other day, and from a casual inspection by a spectator 100 feet away it was impossible to tell whether three men; three women; two men and one woman; two women and one man; a woman, a man and a girl; a woman, a man and a boy; two men and a boy; two men and a girl, or two women and a girl, got out. All three looked just alike. They all wore pants.

A Republican member of the constitutional convention said in a speech last week that he favors negroes attending white schools. It's all a matter of how you are raised, we presume, but it will be quite some time before such things are stylish in the "Show Me" State.—Charleston, Mo., Enterprise.

A prolonged study of statistics leads to the inference that more automobiles were stolen in this country last year than were manufactured in 1899. This is progress.—Cincinnati Times-Star.

What is the use of modern conveniences providing us with leisure and pleasure when to take an automobile ride Sunday afternoon we have to take our life in our hands to dodge "speed cranks," and other such fools?

It is a pity that the cranking of automobiles isn't universal. It's all the exercise some people get.

It is never creditable to a man to overwork his credit at the stores.

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11 a. m., Mr. Culbertson will discuss "The New Birth."

Epworth League, 6:45 p. m.

At 7:30 p. m. Rev. A. B. Culbertson's last sermon for this conference year will be, "Christian Freedom, What Is It?"

Annual conference meets at Flat River the 27th inst. The pastor leaves Monday night, the 25th inst.

Sunday is "decision" day at this church and opportunity will be given both at 11 a. m. and 7:30 p. m.

—Have the edges of your silver plated table knives worn black? If you had bought YOREX silverware there would not have been any black edges, as Yorex blades are made of white Yorex metal and then heavily plated with silver. See our lines of silverware. We carry Yorex, Rogers, Community, etc. Turnbaugh's Jewelry Store, Caruthersville, Mo. 46-47

Hugh Harbert, wife and baby arrived Monday night from Bristow, Oklahoma, and will spend their vacation here visiting their many relatives and friends. Hugh has an excellent position as cashier of a bank at Bristow, and is enthusiastic over opportunities that country affords for a young man.

—Wanted—Number one good milk cow; one that does not give less than three gallons milk per day. Prefer cow not over 6 years old. G. Q. Briggs, Hayti, Mo. 46-47

—25 per cent off on all base ball goods—gloves, balls and bats—this month only. Wells Drug Co., Hayti Mo.

—Screen wire, poultry netting. Lesler Hardware Co., Hayti

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Shot Gun Shells—smokeless	1.05
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